

United States Senate

April 8, 2013

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you consider further action regarding the deteriorating humanitarian, security, and political situation in Syria, I want to express to you directly that I expect the Senate, and the Foreign Relations Committee in particular, to be kept fully and currently informed of events as they unfold and consulted directly before you make any significant changes to the nature and scope of U.S. engagement, including providing lethal assistance to opposition forces and particularly any use of U.S. armed forces.

I would view with great skepticism any application of the narrow definition of "hostilities" advanced by your Administration with respect to Libya in 2011, where the legal analysis offered in support of the Administration's position on military intervention in Libya was tenuous at best. There is no question that the facts and circumstances in Syria now make it inconceivable for your Administration to suggest that U.S. armed forces introduced into Syria or its airspace would not be at immediate risk of becoming involved in hostilities.

The situation in Syria is undoubtedly dire and worsening, and I may ultimately support U.S. involvement in this case. However, our response to this evolving situation must account fully for all of our national security interests, including the risk that U.S. military involvement, limited or otherwise, could trigger escalation that might threaten our regional allies. The best way to account for these interests is for your Administration to keep Congress, and the Foreign Relations Committee in particular, fully and currently informed of events as they happen, consult with us before taking action, and seek legal authorization from Congress for the use of force before committing our military.

We owe it to every man and woman who puts on a uniform to serve our country, and to every taxpayer who funds the operations, to be clear that our entry into any conflict is pursued in a lawful manner. Please let me know of your views on this matter as soon as possible. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Bob Corker
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Ranking Member